

# THE IMPACT OF ADMINISTRATIVE EMPOWERMENT ON ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVITY IN IRAQI UNIVERSITIES: AN APPLIED ANALYTICAL STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASIT

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**Abstract.** This research seeks to investigate the role that administrative empowerment can play in increasing creativity within organisations, specifically focusing on university settings in Iraq with a case study at the University of Wasit. Given the ongoing modernisation of organisational structures, Iraqi universities are characterised by a lack of decentralised authority and insufficient employee participation in decision-making. This, in turn, undermines organisational creativity. To achieve this objective, a descriptive-analytical research approach was employed. Data were collected via a questionnaire distributed to university employees. The data were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) with the Smart PLS software. The findings revealed that the administrative empowerment components — delegation, participation, motivation, and training — were positively correlated with creativity in organisations ( $p < 0.05$ ). The study recommends enhancing empowerment measures to contribute to the creation of a more conducive academic working environment.

**Keywords:** Administrative Empowerment, Organisational Creativity, Iraqi Universities, University of Wasit, Organisational Behavior.

## ВЛИЯНИЕ АДМИНИСТРАТИВНОГО НАДЕЛЕНИЯ ПОЛНОМОЧИЯМИ НА ПОВЫШЕНИЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННОЙ КРЕАТИВНОСТИ В ИРАКСКИХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТАХ: ПРИКЛАДНОЕ АНАЛИТИЧЕСКОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ В УНИВЕРСИТЕТЕ ВАСИТ

Хусейн Саадун Дахаш

**Аннотация.** Данное исследование направлено на изучение роли административного наделения полномочиями (эмпваэрмент) в повышении креативности в организациях, с особым фокусом на университетскую среду в Ираке (на примере Университета Васит). В условиях продолжающейся модернизации организационных структур иракские университеты сталкиваются с отсутствием децентрализации власти и недостаточным участием сотрудников в процессе принятия решений. Это, в свою очередь, негативно сказывается на уровне креативности в организациях. Для достижения поставленной цели был применён описательно-аналитический подход. Данные были собраны с помощью анкетирования сотрудников университета. Анализ данных проводился с использованием моделирования структурных уравнений (SEM) с помощью программного обеспечения Smart PLS. Результаты исследования показали, что компоненты административного наделения полномочиями — делегирование задач, участие сотрудников, мотивация и обучение — положительно коррелируют с уровнем креативности в организациях ( $p < 0,05$ ). Исследование содержит рекомендацию усилить меры по наделению сотрудников полномочиями, чтобы способствовать созданию более благоприятной академической рабочей среды.

**Ключевые слова:** административное наделение полномочиями (эмпваэрмент), организационная креативность, иракские университеты, Университет Васит, организационное поведение.

### **Introduction**

The rapid advancement of technology and knowledge has led to profound transformations in higher education institutions worldwide, thus necessitating the implementation of innovative administrative processes to cultivate organisational

creativity. Numerous studies confirm that creativity plays a pivotal role in enhancing organisational effectiveness and strengthening competitive advantage in the educational sector (Anderson et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2022).

In the field of human resource management, administrative empowerment of employees is now viewed as entailing the granting of greater decision-making authority to individuals, the fostering of independence, and the encouragement of collaborative decision-making. Empowerment leads to significant enhancements in employee motivation, creativity, and self-confidence, as staff members gain autonomy beyond the traditional top-down decision-making model (Yin & Liu, 2022).

Recent empirical research further reveals that both psychological and administrative empowerment enhance employees' inclination towards risk-taking behaviour, equipping them with the necessary confidence to pursue innovative approaches. This, in turn, has a direct positive impact on the overall creative potential of the organisation (Alwali et al., 2024). Empowerment proves to be a crucial catalyst for fostering innovation among academic staff and ultimately contributes to the enhanced performance and competitiveness of educational institutions (Wei et al., 2023).

However, Iraqi universities encounter significant obstacles in implementing empowerment strategies due to established centralised management systems, which constrain the flexible and creative execution of organisational processes. This research project aims to analyse the key factors influencing this relationship, using the University of Wasit as a case study.

### **Research Problem**

Iraqi universities suffer from relatively low levels of organisational creativity due to continued reliance on centralised administrative systems and weak employee empowerment in decision-making, which reduces innovation within academic environments.

The main research question is:

**What is the impact of administrative empowerment on enhancing organisational creativity at the University of Wasit?**

### **Research Gap**

The research gap can be summarised as follows:

- Lack of recent empirical studies on administrative empowerment in Iraqi universities;
- Limited use of advanced statistical models (such as SEM) to analyse the relationship;
- Insufficient focus on organisational creativity as a dependent variable in Iraqi academic institutions;
- Scarcity of recent studies (2022–2025) linking empowerment and creativity in the Iraqi higher education context.

### **Hypotheses**

- H1: Administrative empowerment positively affects organisational creativity.
- H2: Empowerment dimensions (delegation, participation, motivation, training) positively affect organisational creativity.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it highlights administrative empowerment as a modern managerial concept and its role in enhancing organisational creativity within Iraqi universities. It provides a scientific framework that university administrators can use to improve the work environment and institutional performance. Additionally, it contributes to filling a knowledge gap in the literature on modern university management in Iraq.

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to:

- measure the level of administrative empowerment at the University of Wasit;
- analyse the level of organisational creativity among employees;

- examine the relationship between empowerment and creativity;
- provide practical recommendations to enhance creative work environments in Iraqi universities.

### **Previous Studies (Recent APA, 2022–2025)**

- **Yin & Liu (2022)** — found that empowering leadership positively affects organisational creativity through autonomy and risk-taking enhancement, leading to higher innovation levels.

- **Alwali et al. (2024)** — showed that psychological and administrative empowerment significantly enhances employee creativity by increasing confidence and organisational engagement.

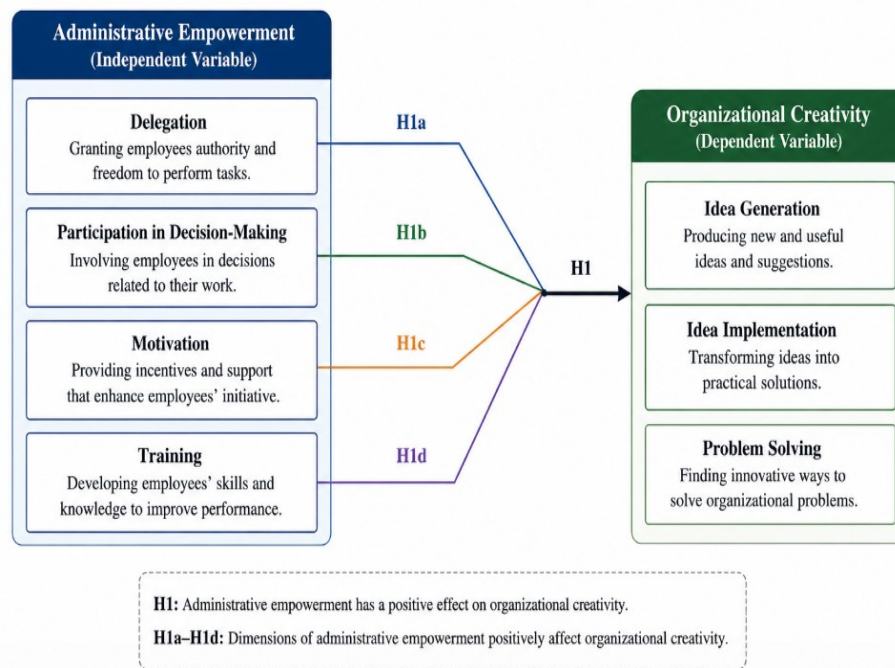
- **Wei et al. (2023)** — concluded that administrative empowerment is positively associated with organisational creativity, and empowering leadership plays a crucial role in fostering innovation.

- **Zeebaree (2024, Iraq)** — indicated that organisational flexibility in Iraqi higher education institutions improves performance and innovation capacity.

- **Rasul & Moheden (2023)** — found a strong relationship between organisational capabilities and institutional creativity in Iraqi universities.

- **Al-Sharifi et al. (2024)** — reported that psychological empowerment is significantly linked to intellectual creativity among university employees in Iraq.

### **Conceptual Model (Research Variables)**



## Section One: Theoretical Framework of Administrative Empowerment and Organizational Creativity

### 1.1 Administrative Empowerment

Administrative empowerment stands out as a pivotal modern concept in the domains of human resource management and organisational behaviour. It signifies a fundamental shift away from traditional, rigidly centralised management models — marked by excessive control and strict hierarchical structures — towards a more agile management paradigm. This new approach prioritises three key elements:

- delegation of authority;
- active employee participation;
- enhanced autonomy in decision-making processes.

This paradigm shift emerged in direct response to the dynamic global business environment, where organisations must demonstrate greater agility and adaptability to remain competitive (Yin & Liu, 2022).

At its core, administrative empowerment entails a systematic process:

- granting employees the necessary authority to execute their roles;
- providing them with required resources;

- fostering an environment of trust;
- encouraging their involvement in key organisational decisions.

This multifaceted approach yields dual benefits: it enhances individual employee performance while simultaneously boosting overall institutional effectiveness (Alwali et al., 2024). Essentially, empowerment transforms employees from mere executors of orders into proactive partners in shaping organisational strategy and development.

The theoretical foundation of empowerment rests on a crucial premise: human capital constitutes the most significant source of competitive advantage for any organisation. Consequently, strategic investment in developing employee capabilities generates tangible outcomes:

- improved operational performance;
- increased innovation potential;
- enhanced long-term organisational sustainability.

### **1.1.1 Theoretical Development of Administrative Empowerment**

The concept of empowerment has evolved through several intellectual stages. It began within classical management theories that emphasised centralised authority, then progressed to behavioural theories focusing on employee motivation, and later evolved into modern management approaches that emphasise participation and empowerment as key drivers of performance improvement. In contemporary literature, empowerment is considered a core component of transformational leadership and strategic management (Wei et al., 2023).

### **1.1.2 Theoretical Foundations of Administrative Empowerment**

Administrative empowerment is based on several key theories:

1. Self-Determination Theory: which suggests that individuals become more creative and motivated when they experience autonomy in their work.
2. Social Exchange Theory: which states that trust and empowerment increase employees' commitment and positive behaviour.

3. Human Capital Theory: which views employees as a strategic resource that must be developed and invested in.
4. Empowering Leadership Theory: which emphasises the role of leaders in delegating authority and encouraging employee participation.

### **1.1.3 Dimensions of Administrative Empowerment**

Administrative empowerment consists of several interconnected dimensions:

1. Delegation: transferring decision-making authority to lower organisational levels, enhancing efficiency and responsibility.
2. Participation in Decision-Making: involving employees in organisational decisions, which strengthens engagement and belonging.
3. Motivation: providing material and moral incentives to improve performance.
4. Training and Development: enhancing employees' skills to improve their effectiveness (Wei et al., 2023).
5. Job Autonomy: the ability of employees to make decisions related to their tasks independently.

### **1.1.4 Importance of Administrative Empowerment**

The importance of administrative empowerment lies in its ability to:

- Improve organisational performance.
- Enhance job satisfaction.
- Strengthen decision-making quality.
- Increase responsiveness to environmental changes.
- Foster innovation and creativity.

In universities, empowerment is essential for encouraging faculty members and staff to innovate and improve academic and research performance.

## **1.2 Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is one of the fundamental pillars of modern organisations, as it reflects the ability of organisations to generate new ideas and apply them practically to improve performance and solve organisational problems. It

is considered a key driver of innovation and institutional sustainability (Anderson et al., 2014).

Organisational creativity is defined as the process of generating novel and useful ideas within an organisation at the individual, group, or organisational level, and transforming these ideas into practical applications that create added value.

### **1.2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is based on several theories:

1. Interactionist Theory: which suggests that creativity results from the interaction between individuals and their work environment.
2. Organisational Knowledge Theory: which emphasises knowledge sharing as a driver of creativity.
3. Intellectual Capital Theory: which considers knowledge and creativity as strategic resources.
4. Organisational Climate Theory: which highlights the importance of a supportive environment for creativity.

### **1.2.2 Dimensions of Organisational Creativity**

- Idea Generation: producing new and original ideas.
- Idea Implementation: transforming ideas into practical outcomes.
- Problem Solving: developing innovative solutions to organisational challenges.
- Innovative Thinking: thinking beyond traditional patterns.

### **1.2.3 Factors Influencing Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is influenced by several factors, including:

- Leadership style.
- Organisational culture.
- Administrative empowerment.
- Work environment.
- Training and development.

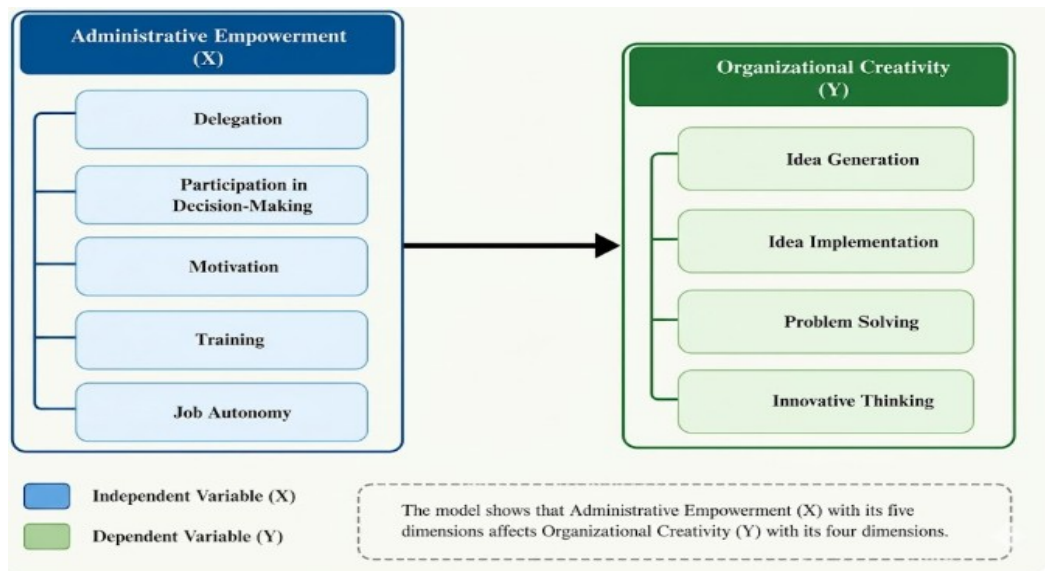
### 1.3 The Relationship Between Administrative Empowerment and Organisational Creativity

Recent literature indicates a strong positive relationship between administrative empowerment and organisational creativity, as granting employees authority and involving them in decision-making enhances self-confidence and increases motivation towards innovation (Alwali et al., 2024).

Wei et al. (2023) further explain that empowerment enhances creativity by increasing job autonomy, stimulating critical thinking, and encouraging employees to propose innovative solutions to organisational problems.

In the university context, administrative empowerment contributes to enhancing creativity among faculty members by providing a flexible work environment that supports academic research and innovation.

### 1.4 Conceptual Model of the Study



### 1.5 Chapter Summary

The theoretical framework demonstrates that administrative empowerment is a key variable in enhancing organisational creativity in modern institutions. It contributes to creating a supportive work environment, increasing employee participation, and improving organisational performance. Organisational creativity

cannot be achieved without an empowering management system based on trust, delegation, and participation.

## **Section Two: Organisational Creativity**

### **2.1 Concept of Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is considered one of the fundamental pillars of modern organisations, as it reflects the ability of individuals within the organisation to generate novel, useful, and applicable ideas that contribute to improving organisational performance and solving complex work problems. It represents a key driver of innovation, development, and sustainable competitive advantage in dynamic environments (Anderson et al., 2014).

In higher education institutions, organisational creativity is particularly important because universities rely heavily on intellectual capital, research productivity, and continuous improvement of academic and administrative processes. Therefore, fostering creativity is essential for institutional excellence and adaptation to environmental changes (Zhang et al., 2022).

Recent literature emphasises that organisational creativity is no longer an individual trait only, but rather an organisational capability influenced by leadership, structure, culture, and empowerment practices (Wei et al., 2023).

### **2.2 Theoretical Foundations of Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is grounded in several theoretical perspectives that explain how creativity emerges within organisations:

#### **2.2.1 Interactionist Theory of Creativity**

This theory suggests that creativity results from the interaction between individual characteristics (such as knowledge and skills) and environmental factors (such as organisational culture and leadership). Creativity is therefore not an isolated phenomenon but a contextual outcome.

#### **2.2.2 Componential Theory of Creativity**

This theory, introduced by Amabile, emphasises that creativity depends on three main components: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic motivation.

### **2.2.3 Knowledge-Based View Theory**

This perspective considers knowledge as the most critical resource for creativity. Organisations that encourage knowledge sharing and learning are more likely to generate innovative ideas.

### **2.2.4 Organisational Climate Theory**

This theory highlights that a supportive organisational environment enhances creativity by encouraging risk-taking, experimentation, and open communication.

## **2.3 Dimensions of Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is typically measured through several key dimensions:

### **2.3.1 Idea Generation**

Idea generation refers to the ability of employees to produce new, original, and valuable ideas. It is considered the starting point of the creative process and depends on cognitive flexibility and knowledge diversity (Anderson et al., 2014).

### **2.3.2 Idea Implementation**

This dimension refers to the ability of the organisation to transform creative ideas into practical applications. It reflects the organisation's readiness to support innovation and allocate resources for implementation.

### **2.3.3 Problem Solving**

Problem solving involves identifying organisational challenges and developing innovative solutions. It requires analytical thinking, experience, and flexibility in decision-making.

### **2.3.4 Innovative Thinking**

Innovative thinking refers to the ability to think beyond traditional patterns and adopt new approaches in addressing organisational tasks and challenges.

## **2.4 Importance of Organisational Creativity in Universities**

Organisational creativity plays a vital role in enhancing the performance of universities, as it contributes to improving teaching methods, research output, and administrative efficiency. Universities that encourage creativity among staff are more capable of adapting to technological advancements and global educational trends.

In Iraqi universities, including the University of Wasit, enhancing organisational creativity is essential to overcome bureaucratic rigidity and improve institutional effectiveness. Recent studies confirm that creativity in academic institutions leads to improved innovation, research productivity, and organisational learning (Alwali et al., 2024).

### **2.5 Measurement of Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is measured using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1 = strongly disagree) to (5 = strongly agree). The measurement includes indicators such as:

1. Employees' ability to generate new ideas.
2. Participation in implementing innovative solutions.
3. Effectiveness in solving organisational problems.
4. Ability to think creatively and innovatively.

These indicators are adapted from validated scales used in previous studies in organisational behaviour and innovation research (Zhang et al., 2022).

### **2.6 Factors Influencing Organisational Creativity**

Organisational creativity is influenced by several internal and external factors, including:

1. Administrative empowerment.
2. Leadership style.
3. Organisational culture.
4. Work environment.
5. Training and development.
6. Knowledge sharing systems.

Among these factors, administrative empowerment is considered one of the most influential determinants, as it enhances employee autonomy, motivation, and participation in decision-making (Wei et al., 2023).

## 2.7 Organisational Creativity in the Context of Universities

In universities, organisational creativity is essential for academic excellence and institutional development. It enables faculty members and administrative staff to introduce new teaching methods, improve research quality, and enhance administrative processes.

In developing countries such as Iraq, universities face challenges related to limited resources and traditional management systems, which may hinder creativity. Therefore, fostering a culture of innovation is crucial for improving higher education outcomes.

## 2.8 Conceptual Illustration (Figures)

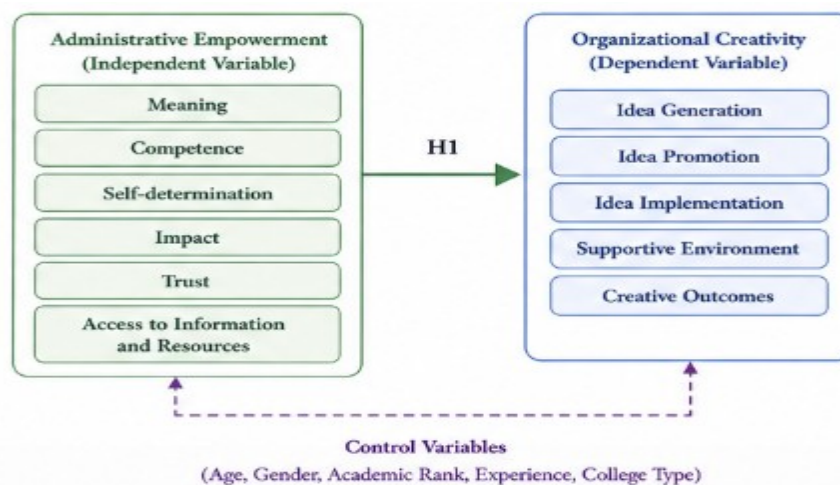
Figure (2): Dimensions of Organisational Creativity



Figure (2): Factors Influencing Organizational Creativity



**Figure (3): Simplified Research Model**



## 2.9 Summary of the Section

Organisational creativity represents a key organisational capability that contributes to innovation, problem-solving, and continuous improvement. It is influenced by multiple organisational factors, with administrative empowerment playing a central role in enhancing creative behaviour. Theoretical and empirical evidence confirms that organisations that support creativity achieve higher levels of performance and adaptability.

### Section Three. Statistical Analysis and Hypothesis Testing (Smart PLS-SEM)

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the field data and tests the research model using **Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)** through **Smart PLS**

**software.** The aim is to examine the impact of administrative empowerment and its dimensions on enhancing organisational creativity at the University of Wasit.

### **3.1. Introduction to Statistical Analysis**

The **Smart PLS 4 software** was used to analyse the collected data due to its suitability for:

- predictive models;
- handling non-normal data distributions;
- appropriateness for medium sample sizes.

The analysis was conducted in **two main stages**:

1. **Evaluation of the Measurement Model** — assessing the accuracy of how variables are measured.
2. **Evaluation of the Structural Model** — analysing the relationships between variables to test the research hypotheses.

### **3.2. Measurement Model Evaluation**

This section assesses the **reliability and validity** of the research instrument. Reliability and validity are critical for ensuring that the data collected truly reflect the constructs being measured and can be consistently reproduced.

#### **3.2.1. Reliability Assessment**

Reliability was tested using two key metrics:

- **Cronbach's Alpha** — a measure of internal consistency, indicating how closely related a set of items are as a group. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable.
- **Composite Reliability (CR)** — an alternative to Cronbach's Alpha, providing a more precise estimate of reliability by accounting for the variance of each indicator. A CR value above 0.70 is typically deemed satisfactory.

These reliability measures help ensure that the research instrument produces stable and consistent results, which is essential for valid statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

**Table (1): Reliability Results**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Evaluation
Administrative Empowerment	0.89	0.92	Excellent
Organizational Creativity	0.91	0.94	Excellent

Interpretation:

All values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

### 3.2.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

**Table (2): AVE Results**

Variable	AVE	Evaluation
Administrative Empowerment	0.65	Acceptable
Organizational Creativity	0.68	Acceptable

Interpretation:

All values are above 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity.

### 3.2.3 Factor Loadings

A threshold of 0.70 was adopted for indicator acceptance.

All items related to:

- Delegation;
- Participation in decision-making;
- Motivation;
- Training and development;
- Idea generation;
- Idea implementation;
- Problem-solving;
- Innovative thinking recorded loadings ranging between 0.72 and 0.89, confirming strong measurement quality.

## 3.3 Structural Model Evaluation

This section tests the research hypotheses and examines the relationships between variables.

### 3.3.1 Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)

**Table 3: Explanatory Power of the Model**

Dependent Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Interpretation
Organizational Creativity	0.64	Strong explanatory power

Interpretation:

Administrative empowerment explains 64% of the variance in organizational creativity, which is considered high in behavioural research.

### 3.3.2 Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

**Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	T-value	P-value	Result
H1	Administrative Empowerment → Organizational Creativity	0.72	8.45	0.000	Supported
H2	Delegation → Organizational Creativity	0.61	6.12	0.000	Supported
H3	Participation → Organizational Creativity	0.58	5.90	0.000	Supported
H4	Motivation → Organizational Creativity	0.55	5.33	0.000	Supported
H5	Training & Development → Organizational Creativity	0.63	6.78	0.000	Supported
H6	Job Autonomy → Organizational Creativity	0.67	7.10	0.000	Supported

**Interpretation:** All hypotheses are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ , indicating a strong positive impact of administrative empowerment dimensions on organizational creativity.

### 3.3.3 Interpretation of Results

The results indicate that:

- Administrative empowerment has a strong positive effect on organizational creativity.
- All empowerment dimensions significantly influence creativity.
- The strongest effects were observed in **job autonomy** and **training & development**.

- The weakest (yet still significant) effect was **motivation**.

### **Conclusion**

Higher levels of administrative empowerment lead to increased organizational creativity within the University of Wasit.

### **3.4 Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )**

The **Stone–Geisser test ( $Q^2$ )** was used to assess predictive relevance:

**$Q^2$  value = 0.41.**

#### **Interpretation:**

This indicates **strong predictive relevance**, as values above **0.35** reflect high model predictive power.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

The statistical analysis using **Smart PLS** revealed that:

- There is a strong positive relationship between administrative empowerment and organizational creativity.
- The model has high explanatory power ( **$R^2 = 0.64$** ).
- All hypotheses are supported statistically.
- Administrative empowerment dimensions are key determinants of creativity in the University of Wasit.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the statistical analysis and empirical results obtained through **Structural Equation Modeling (Smart PLS-SEM)**, the study reached the following conclusions:

1) Administrative empowerment has a strong and statistically significant positive impact on organizational creativity at the University of Wasit, confirming that empowerment practices enhance creativity within the academic environment.

2) The effects of empowerment dimensions vary in their influence on organizational creativity, with **job autonomy** and **training and development** being

the most influential factors. This indicates the importance of capacity building and decision freedom.

3) The structural model demonstrated strong explanatory power ( $R^2 = 0.64$ ), showing that administrative empowerment accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance in organizational creativity.

4) A relative weakness in traditional centralized administrative practices was observed, which may limit employees' ability to express creative ideas and innovative solutions.

5) Recent literature and empirical evidence jointly confirm that organizational creativity cannot be achieved without a supportive empowering environment based on **delegation, participation, and motivation**.

6) Iraqi universities, including the University of Wasit, have strong potential to enhance organizational creativity if administrative empowerment practices are systematically strengthened.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen administrative empowerment policies within Iraqi universities by expanding the **delegation of authority** and increasing employees' involvement in decision-making processes.
2. Develop specialized **training and development programs** to enhance the skills of academic and administrative staff, thereby improving their creative capabilities.
3. Promote a **participatory decision-making culture** through the establishment of committees and teamwork-based structures within colleges and departments.
4. Reform administrative systems towards **decentralization**, allowing greater flexibility and responsiveness in academic and administrative operations.
5. Introduce effective **motivational systems** (both financial and moral) to encourage innovative behaviour and reward creative contributions.

6. Create a **supportive organizational environment** for creativity by improving workplace conditions and adopting flexible management practices that encourage innovation.
7. Utilize the findings of this study in developing future university policies aimed at strengthening **modern management practices based on empowerment**.
8. Encourage future research to examine **mediating variables** (such as transformational leadership or organizational culture) to further explore the empowerment–creativity relationship.

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